

The Lucky Jacket by twoseas

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Everyone Lives/Nobody Dies, Blow Jobs, Coming Out, Flashbacks, Getting Together, Hand Jobs, I attend the Edgar Wright school of callbacks parallels and repetition, I'd never put them through too much, Light Angst, Love Confessions, M/M, Reddie tropes galore, Richie and Eddie levels of swearing, but don't worry, canon has hurt these middle aged babes enough, it gets emotional

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Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

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Summary:

After everything, Eddie can tell something big is still missing from his memories.

Then he remembers.

Featuring the issues caused by evil magic memory wipes, emotions, Richie Tozier in a leather jacket, and glasses that'll need a cleaning.

1. The Quarry

Author's Note:

I've had notes on this story since I saw Chapter 2 and I finally finished it! A December miracle.

Also one particular line was HEAVILY inspired by that scene from Barry where Bill Hader's in that Cruisin' grey long sleeve and shorts because I'm weak.

Please, enjoy!

They won.

They survived.

And they decided to celebrate by swimming in yet another Derry cesspool.

Eddie glared at the others while he did his best to keep his head above water. He had a stab wound to protect. There wasn't enough antiseptic in the world.

Bev dunked Ben while Ben beamed beatifically at her despite having his head shoved underwater every two seconds. Mike and Bill did the same, alternating between horsing around and hugging each other in teary victory. Stan pulled a ziplock baggie containing his phone out of his pocket and proceeded to call his wife. He swam a ways away, shouting about how much he loved her and how he needed to see her and introduce her to his friends.

Eddie did his best not to think about his own wife.

And then he realized that for all the noise - the splashing and yelling and whooping - none of it came from Richie.

Richie was completely silent. He sat on a rock, his glasses in his hands. He cleaned the cracked lens, his expression somber. Somber and distant.

Eddie swam closer, ready to ask him what was wrong.

But Richie, naturally, spoke first.

“Did you guys know Pennywise was super homophobic?”

Everything stopped.

“Patty, I’ll call you back. Something really important is happening,” Stan whispered into his phone before hanging up. He put his phone carefully back in the baggy and sealed it. He didn’t take his eyes off Richie the whole time.

Eddie’s heart started pounding.

“I mean,” Richie continued, still staring sightlessly at his glasses, “I don’t really expect the highest of moral standards from a child eating racist little bitch. But that clown...was really fucking homophobic.”

Everyone started swimming closer.

Richie laughed, but it was entirely devoid of humor. His eyes were red rimmed and Eddie heavily suspected the moisture clinging to his lashes wasn’t quarry water.

“And he just wouldn’t stop,” Richie told his glasses. “Telling me not to touch the other boys or they’ll know. Singing that stupid goddamn song about my dirty little secret. Like, I fucking get it, ok? I got it when I was thirteen and I sure as shit get it now. What the fuck.”

The others gathered around him.

“And the scary closets. Both times with the fucking closets. What a piece of shit. I’m glad I ripped his bullshit tentacle leg thing off.”

He paused, then swore in a choked voice, “Fucking homophobic assholes.”

Richie broke into sobs, his hand coming up to cover his face.

The other Losers surrounded Richie, all getting their arms around him or resting their heads and hands against whatever free space

they could find. Eddie ended up at one of Richie's arms, his uninjured cheek against Richie's bicep and their hands interlocked. Bill was on the other side, his position mirroring Eddie's.

The sobs slowed and Richie sniffled.

"I'm gay, by the way."

The others all squeezed and pat him lovingly.

"In case that wasn't incredibly obvious by my breakdown."

Everyone huffed sympathetic laughs.

"It's ok, Rich," Bev told him in a soft voice. "Thank you for trusting us enough to tell us."

Eddie closed his eyes and leaned the entire weight of his head against Richie's arm. He ignored the pressure in his chest, the tightening of his gut, the nudging of something in the back of his mind. He focused on Richie and sending as much love and affection as he could through every point of contact.

The hand Eddie held tightened around his fingers gently. Eddie wondered if Richie was trying to convey the same message.

"It's not ok," Richie sighed.

"Of course it is," Mike contradicted gently, voice deep and low and utterly convinced.

"No, it's really not," Richie told them, shaking his head. "I lost my glasses."

Everyone took a moment to suss out whether or not he was joking before they collectively let out one giant groan.

Stan slammed his head against Richie's shoulder, an exasperated, disbelieving noise escaping his lips. "Seriously, Richie?"

The others dived and searched for Richie's missing glasses while Eddie stayed at his side.

Even as Eddie complained about waterborne illnesses and chastised Richie for losing his glasses, he couldn't let go of the feeling of having forgotten something important.

Notes for the Chapter:

Richie: Was I hallucinating because of my trauma and subsequent meltdown or did Stan have a phone in a freezer bag?

Eddie: No, yeah, he definitely had his phone in a freezer bag.

Richie: ...nerd.

Stan: First my shower caps. Now my freezer bag.

2. New York

Barricaded his bedroom, Eddie sat on the toilet lid in the en suite and smashed the call button as fast as he could. Richie picked up after one ring.

“Eddie, my love! You get my text?”

“I just told Myra I want a divorce and that I’ve already been in contact with my lawyers and I’m leaving tonight. I’m locked in my bedroom and I’ve got my bags packed, but she’s outside, she keeps trying to get me to stay, and I’m freaking the fuck out.”

There was a pregnant pause on the other end of the line. Eddie closed his eyes, doing his best to focus on his own breathing and not on the plaintive, wheedling calls from Myra at his door.

“What’s your address?”

“What?” Eddie glared at the off white walls of his bathroom.

“Address, Eddie, come on. Work with me, man.”

Shuffling noises came from Richie’s side of the call, rustling and frenzied.

“What are you going to do? Fly all the way out here from LA?” Eddie scoffed.

“Uh, yeah I would,” Richie told him distractedly. “But I don’t need to because I’m already in New York.”

That had Eddie coming up short before a small spark of outrage had him demanding, “Why didn’t you say you were in New York, jackass? Were you seriously going to come to the city and not tell me?!”

“So now I’m to blame when you’re too busy divorcing your mom-wife and hiding behind a door like poor Shelley Duvall to read your messages?”

Scowling at the wall, Eddie took in a deep breath and let out a,

“Wow.”

“Check your texts, dipshit,” Richie sighed tiredly.

Still fuming, Eddie moved the phone from his ear and tapped and swiped to his texts. Sure enough:

Hey bb u up?

Jk jk

No but for serious I just landed in New York wanna hang?

Eddie brought the phone back up to his ear. “Oh.”

“Yeah,” Richie drawled. “Now tell me your address, I just called a car and I need a destination.”

After mindlessly rattling off his address, Eddie asked incredulously, “Are you seriously coming?”

“Yeah, duh,” Richie told him, voice muffled as the sounds of keys jostling and a door closing filled the line. Hurried footsteps echoed tinnily from wherever Richie happened to be.

“Where are you?” Eddie asked in a slightly raised voice, doing his best to drown out the sounds of Myra’s impatient knocking and increasingly shrill accusations. At least she didn’t have an axe.

Richie’s voice came in much more clearly. “My apartment.”

“You have an apartment? Not a hotel room?” Eyes bugging, Eddie continued on, voice pitched higher, “How the fuck do you have a New York apartment AND a house in LA?”

“Because I’m rich as shit, dude. I have televised specials and sold out tours. You think I told all those shitty jokes I didn’t write for the fun of it?”

"I assumed it was because you're an attention whore who dies like Tinkerbell if he doesn't get enough applause," Eddie mumbled, coming to terms with the fact that Richie could afford housing in two of the most expensive cities in America. Eddie was well off enough himself but *Jesus* .

"Yeah, that too." The line went muffled again as Richie said something that sounded like Eddie's address. "So how much baggage are you bringing? Physical, not emotional. Because my apartment's decent sized, but if you're packing like you did for Derry, I might have to rent out the rest of the floor."

"You're such an asshole," Eddie informed him casually, running a hand over his face. "I've only got like three suitcases. Mostly clothes, some personal shit like my laptop and toiletries. That's all I want. Myra can have the rest. I don't care."

Richie whistled long and low. His voice was gentle when he next spoke. "Damn, Eds. You alright?"

"I'm going to be. I think."

"Hell yeah, you are."

They stayed on the line in comfortable silence before Eddie managed a soft, "Thanks, Rich. For doing this. I'm betting this wasn't what you had planned for your time in the city. I'll be out of your hair as soon as I get back on my feet."

"Hey, hey, no, shut up," Richie immediately started talking over him. "Listen close, because I want you to hear this, alright? You can stay with me as long as you want. Move on in. You can have my apartment for all I care, I'll put your name on the goddamn paperwork right this second, I swear to God I will."

Covering his mouth with his hand, Eddie closed his eyes and drew in a shaky breath. "Richie..."

"No, I *need* you to hear this," Richie scolded. "Hanging out with you, helping you out, I like doing this shit. And getting to live with you, my favorite angry, surprisingly ripped gnome friend? A dream come

true. So don't worry. I know for a fact you're going to be sick of me long before I get sick of you. You'll probably be shipping me back to LA after dinner."

"I don't know about that," Eddie told his palm, eyes welling and mouth twitching into a reluctant grin at Richie's adamant response.

"Careful, Eddie Spaghetti." Eddie could actually hear the shit eating grin in Richie's tone. "Keep that up and I might start to suspect you actually like me."

"No one will ever believe you," Eddie told him dryly despite the smile that was now without a doubt on his face. "Especially when the only clue left behind at the murder scene is a jar of pasta sauce."

Richie's raucous laughter trailed off into more comfortable silence. Neither of them hung up the phone.

"Still," Eddie whispered. "Thank you, Richie."

"Anything for you, Eds."

A nagging feeling in the back of Eddie's mind made him feel like he was forgetting something, something huge. He'd had the feeling before and on more than one occasion, his recovered memories coming back in fits and starts. Vague inclinations became persistent feelings became solid memories. But this time the vague inclination refused to solidify and that had Eddie frowning.

But other, more current feelings took precedence in his thoughts.

Eddie pushed the unsettled feeling away, too busy being filled with immense gratitude and tender appreciation for Richie to care about much else.

Notes for the Chapter:

Bev: So you just...dropped everything and moved Eddie in. Gave him keys. Complete access to your apartment. Offered to fly the both of you first class to your Los Angeles home at any time if he ever wants to leave New York.

Rich: Yeah. Like exactly that.

Stan: Fellas-

Rich: Don't you fucking dare finish that very hilarious meme, Staniel.

3. Los Angeles

“This is a shockingly nice place,” Eddie commented, wonder in his eyes as he studied Richie’s home. It wasn’t the ostentatious or overly luxurious house he feared nor was it the filthy bachelor pad he had nightmares about walking into. Instead it was spacious, but cozy and clean, clearly professionally serviced, with obvious signs of Richie’s life - a Batman throw blanket on the plush cushioned couch, stacks of books and comic books on the coffee table, knickknacks and ugly little souvenir mugs and figures from various places across the country on shelves and side tables, a well equipped entertainment system surrounded by Richie’s massive movie collection. Eddie noticed there weren’t any photos, just framed movie posters and prints. It was certainly more lived in than Richie’s New York place, but it was still sort of empty in a way Eddie couldn’t exactly pinpoint.

“Yeah, I was as surprised as anyone when I realized I didn’t actually like living in squalor,” Richie told him with a nervous grin. His fingers tapped an odd beat against his thigh and his shoulders were hunched. “So you like it?”

“Yeah,” Eddie smiled, choosing not to tease Richie while he was looking so unusually anxious. “It’s great.”

Richie grinned dopily at Eddie. He shook himself after a moment, grabbed some of Eddie’s things, and rushed through the house. “Let me show you your room.”

The guest bedroom was sizable and looked like a more inviting hotel room, but that was all down to Richie’s welcome - he had thrown the door open and waved into the room with flourish, smiling wide enough to cinch his eyes. Together they dragged Eddie’s luggage in and then Richie was pushing him back out for the tour.

“The office,” he pushed through a door and revealed a sunny room with a large desk complete with computer, scattered papers, and notebooks. “It’s big enough we can move another desk in if you want a work space.”

Eddie frowned at the desk. “Richie, why the fuck is there lotion and a

box of tissues by your desktop.”

Silence reigned as they looked each other right in the eyes for a prolonged moment.

Richie mock scowled, hand to his heart. “Edward Kaspbrak, how dare you! How old do you think I am?”

“Do you actually want my answer to that?”

“The tissues are there because sometimes I get allergies. And the lotion is there because my hands get dry. I do not jerk off with Jergens at my desk like some sad pubescent boy trying to hide his shame from his family!” Richie strode dramatically out of the office, calling over his shoulder, “I keep lube in the right side desk drawer for that.”

Eddie chased him down the hallway, shouting, “You’re disgusting! Can’t you keep that shit in your bedroom like a normal person, Jesus Christ!”

“Oh, I do,” Richie told him with a wink. “That’s just my emergency lube for when I want a quick jerkoff break from work. My room is where I keep all the freaky shit for when I’m feeling really frisky.”

Sputtering incoherently, Eddie felt the blood rush to his face.

Richie just threw his head back and laughed.

The tour ended and Eddie took the time to unpack. Richie gave him his space, disappearing into his own room while Eddie settled in. They reconvened in the living room, throwing themselves down on the couch the same way they did back in Richie’s New York place - sat on opposite ends, but with their legs tangled. It was a more comfortable callback to their time in the hammock.

“What’s in there?” Eddie asked with a yawn, waving his hand in the vague direction of a door down the hall.

Richie looked up from where he’d been browsing delivery menus on

his phone. "Huh?"

"That door, dumbass," Eddie nudged Richie's ribs with his toe, earning a glower and a swat. Eddie kept nudging until Richie grabbed his ankle and held it in place. "You gave me the tour, but never showed me what that door leads to."

Blinking over at the aforementioned door, Richie shrugged his shoulders. "Don't go in there."

Eyebrows rising, Eddie cast an incredulous look Richie's way. "You do realize how fucking shady that sounded, right? That was the shadiest thing you could say about a door in your house. What do you have back there? Drug lab? Sex dungeon? Bunch of dead bodies? Why don't you want me opening the door, Richie? What are you hiding?"

"Oh my god," Richie groaned, leaning back on the couch's armrest. "I'm not hiding anything behind the door. I'm not fucking Bluebeard. You can open the door if you want, I just don't think you should."

"That doesn't really sound better," Eddie guffawed, jabbing Richie in the armpit with his free foot and taking advantage of where he knew Richie was ticklish. "What's behind the door? Huh? What's behind the door, Rich?"

"No, shit, stop!" Richie grabbed Eddie's other ankle and held both of his feet hostage. "You're such a bratty little shit, Jesus. It's a closet, Eddie. It's where I shove all my junk. Stop assaulting me with your stinky little feet."

Eddie threw his foot down quickly, heel dropping onto Richie's stomach and making him wheeze. "My feet do not stink. Nor are they little. Fuck you very much."

"They're feet, Eds, feet stink," Richie told him haughtily.

"Not my fucking feet."

"Yeah, well, I personally think your itsy bitsy size sixes reek."

"I wash my feet, Richie. I shower twice a day and I wash my fucking

feet. I don't know whose feet you're talking about with this bullshit, but they're not my clean, well kept fucking feet. And they are not size sixes!"

"Oh, sorry."

"You better be."

Richie shook Eddie's feet, smiling brightly. "I meant five and a halves."

Yanking his feet back, Eddie sat up just long enough to regain his balance before lunging forward at a madly cackling Richie. "I'm gonna kill you!"

The fight only ended when Eddie "accidentally" rolled Richie off the couch, the bastard laughing right until his head knocked into the leg of the coffee table and even then he still found it in himself to giggle into the carpet.

Eddie tried not to find that too endearing.

He didn't succeed.

The closet sat forgotten until about two weeks into Eddie's Los Angeles residency. Then he got into a cleaning kick and needed to see what he was working with.

"You've got to be kidding me." He stared in disgust at the floor to ceiling clutter. "Richie!"

"Yeah?" Richie strolled in nonchalantly, completely unmoved by Eddie's screech. "What's up?"

"You're a hoarder," Eddie decided with a bob of his head. "This is the proof you're a hoarder. I need to call the other Losers and set up an intervention. The fuck."

"I'm not a fucking hoarder, it's just some boxes and shit, relax about it."

“This is a mess. You probably have mice and silver fish. I bet a fucking minotaur is living in here.”

“You’re the most extra little man I’ve ever met and I work in show business,” Richie grumbled under his breath. “It’s not that bad. And I told you not to go in here anyways! So why the fuck are you digging around my closet?”

“Because I’m making this place more livable-”

“I’m telling Renatta you disparaged her and her team's cleaning abilities.”

“-and you need to take care of your shit anyway!” Eddie finished in a raised voice, ignoring the threat.

“Alright, alright,” Richie relented, hands held out in defeat. “But only because you’re cute when you yell at me in those yellow rubber gloves.”

Richie made to face his stored mess, entirely missing the way Eddie looked down at his gloves in confusion before looking up at Richie’s back with a dumbstruck expression. His heart spasmed in his chest.

Leaving Richie to deal with his things, Eddie headed to the kitchen where he started sorting through the cupboards. He discarded irreparably stained, scratched, scuffed, chipped, and expired items in a daze, that same feeling of having forgotten something he desperately needed to remember overtaking his thoughts.

That unsettled feeling buzzed through his brain and had his insides shifting. It was like missing a step combined with not remembering if the oven was still on. It was undeniable but hard to pinpoint and Eddie wracked his brain to sort through it, make the memory whole.

The Losers had all talked about similar moments. Sometimes a new message would appear in the group chat unrelated to any previous conversation, one of the others remembering something long forgotten. Occasionally Richie would run down the hallway or bang on the bathroom door shouting about the time Eddie lectured him about dirt before slipping in mud or when Richie got Bill to laugh so

hard he spat soda all over Stan's new shoes.

But this felt different. It felt like something more than just a funny moment of nostalgia. It felt heavy, weighty. It felt like a turning point.

Eddie couldn't figure out what it was. Why it felt so necessary.

The kitchen organized, wiped down, and otherwise dealt with, Eddie ambled back toward the living room to find it overtaken by Richie's things. Overflowing boxes and bags took up most of the floor space and Eddie gawked at the unbelievable amount of stuff Richie had managed to cram into his closet.

"Hey," Richie called from where he sat in the middle of all the chaos.

"What the fuck," Eddie grunted, picking his way over to the couch. He plopped down to watch, eyes lingering on Richie while Richie went through his things.

He looked good, if a little dusty. He was peaceful, an absentmindedly happy smile on his face. His hair curled frizzy from sweat at his forehead and the nape of his neck and it looked grey where the dust touched a few locks of hair. He'd look annoyingly good with grey hair, Eddie realized with a jolt. It was easy to see where Richie had begun organizing, boxes on one side of the room clearly having been sorted through and repacked more neatly. Richie sat among it all with his legs splayed out, shoulders lax and posture easy.

"I forgot I had most of this stuff," he shrugged sheepishly, holding a couple beat up paperbacks he'd taken from one of the boxes.

"That happens when you shove a bunch of shit into a closet," Eddie scolded.

"Story of my life, amiright?" Richie asked with a quirk of his eyebrow.

"If this is the kind of new material you're planning to debut," Eddie told him bluntly, "expect the comeback to last all of one night."

"Don't worry, I'll also throw in a few colorful jokes playing on the

word ‘comeback’ that’re sure to land well with my fellow gays and some of the ladies,” Richie mumbled offhandedly.

Heat crawled up Eddie’s neck. “I want you to take a minute and think about your choices.”

“Babe, if I thought about my choices, I wouldn’t be me,” Richie said with a laugh, turning his head to grace Eddie with a playful smirk.

He went back to flipping through his old books, giving Eddie the opportunity to gulp unobserved.

Sitting up straight and composing himself, Eddie studied the stuff with a curious eye. “Where’s all this from anyway?”

“Mostly college.” Richie threw a tattered copy of Walt Whitman at Eddie. “Some stuff from my earlier days waiting tables and tending bar.”

Fumbling the catch, Eddie scowled at Richie’s profile before turning his eyes downward and flipping through the pages. He huffed a laugh. “Did you seriously use leaves as bookmarks in *Leaves of Grass*?”

“I was young and gay and outside when I read it, what can I tell you?” Kicking his freshly organized box towards the sorted pile, Richie gave a lazy wave of his hand. “Sometimes clichés are cliché for a reason.”

“You’re ridiculous.”

Humming in agreement, Richie’s attention was already turning towards his next box. Eddie skimmed through the old paperback, stopping to read the poems that a young Richie had thought to bookmark. There were a few lines that were circled in ballpoint pen. Eddie paid particular attention to those.

Losing track of time, Eddie didn’t look up until Richie let out a disbelieving, triumphant shout, the sudden noise startling him out of his seat.

“What the hell, bro?” Eddie demanded, setting the paperback on the

coffee table so he could level his best glare at Richie.

Grinning wide and unrepentant, Richie shook out an old leather jacket. A few cardboard fibers floated to the ground. "I found my favorite jacket! I thought I lost this sexy little number in one of my moves."

"Jacket?" Eddie asked slowly, that nagging feeling intensifying, moving from the corner of his mind to the forefront.

"Yeah!" Bouncing up and down, Richie shimmied hastily out of his hoodie and tossed it aside. "God, I loved this fucking jacket. I shit you not, I almost got in a fistfight with another comedian who accidentally took it after an open mic night."

Sliding his arms through the sleeves before smoothing the front, Richie looked up at Eddie with a warm expression.

"You probably don't remember, but I found it at a thrift shop when we were in high school. The one you always said would give me lice or crabs or some kind of rash."

Moving around, feeling out the surprisingly good fit of his jacket now that he was a forty year old grown man and not a weedy little up and comer, Richie didn't notice that Eddie was staring unblinkingly at him, eyes glazing over with tears.

Turning on the spot, Richie tucked his hands into his jacket pockets and smiled crookedly at Eddie. "What do you think, Eds?"

Eddie broke.

4. Then

Eddie slowed his pace and noticed that Richie was doing the same. It was the last time Richie would ever walk him to his house and Eddie wanted it to last. He hoped Richie did too.

Richie had hit another growth spurt towards the end of senior year and it was like looking at a badly dressed cornstalk. Beat up sneakers, shredded jeans that were way too tight and just a little too short showing his mismatched socks, a button up shirt in the stupidest color, a pale blue graphic t-shirt, and over it all a worn leather jacket. It hung off Richie's lanky frame, made him look like he was drowning in leather, but he found it at a thrift store a few months ago and he refused to wear any other jacket.

"Alright there, Eddie?"

"Shut up, I'm fine," Eddie shot back, not as vehement as he would normally be, but he was feeling...sad. Upset. Worried. And all over that was draped a looming sense of loneliness. Loss.

"It's ok to not be fine, you know."

Eddie blinked at the uncharacteristic sobriety in Richie's soft response. "I'm thinking. Is that alright with you? I know you don't indulge often, but some of us like it every once in awhile."

Chuckling, Richie turned a bright grin towards Eddie and shook his head. "I dunno. Sounds like dangerous, boring work to me."

"You're so full of shit, Richie."

"Most of us are," Richie told him in a voice that was vaguely reminiscent of a wise old man. "But that's why they make laxatives."

"You're disgusting. I hate you. Get away from me."

Contrary to his words, Eddie slowed down even more. Which was somehow possible despite the snail's pace he set before. He also moved maybe half a step closer to Richie, close enough their hands almost brushed but Eddie very much did not think about that little

tidbit.

Normally Richie would keep egging Eddie on, but instead he just huffed a laugh and looked forward. Eddie watched him with a frown. Eddie wasn't the first to leave (his heart hurt to think of Bev and Ben and Stan, none of whom had called or written even after promising) and he wouldn't be the last (Bill wouldn't leave for college for a week and Mike was still disconcertingly cagey about if he'd be going or staying). Richie himself was leaving in three days. Just three days. Eddie was so grateful he didn't have to watch Richie leave. Being the one leaving was hard enough.

They were in a quiet part of town still - closer to the barrens than to any of the neighborhoods. There was no one around, just him and Richie.

"Eddie?" The sounds of Richie's footsteps stopped.

"Yeah?" Eddie paused, turning to stare at Richie.

He fidgeted in place, eyes darting around and bottom lip chewed mercilessly by his teeth. "There's something I want to tell you. Two somethings. I've, uh, wanted to tell you for awhile. But I guess, um, I was scared?"

"You can tell me anything," Eddie asserted at once, brow creasing. Richie looked more anxious than Eddie had ever seen him and that was saying something considering the shit they'd seen just a few years ago.

"This is kind of..." Richie trailed off and looked away, jaw clenched. "This could go really, really bad. So...I kind of chickened out until literally the night before you leave. Just in case."

"Jesus, Rich, how bad is this news?" Eddie tried for levity but ended up sounding intensely concerned.

"That, uh, depends on your reaction," Richie chuckled humorlessly.

Eddie met Richie's gaze and tried his best to look reassuring. "Richie. Just tell me."

“Ok, alright. So.” Richie stared down at the ground with a vaguely lost expression. “Uh, you know how I always talk about fucking like...every female person in Derry?”

“Yes, Richie, I’m very aware of that,” Eddie told him with a grimace, concern melting away into irritation. “Is this seriously what you had me worried about? You’re such an asshole.”

“Wait, wait!” Richie held his hands out, eyes wide and still full of fear. That had Eddie swinging right back to concerned. “I have a point. I swear I’m getting to it.”

“Then maybe get to it?” Eddie prompted, now feeling anxious himself. His palms were sweating and he surreptitiously wiped them against his shorts.

“I will! Ok. So I always talk a big game, right? About how all the women want my enormous dick and shit?”

Nodding his annoyance at the continuation of that particular line of explanation, Eddie waved dismissively. “Yeah, yeah. I know that part.”

Richie inhaled a shuddering breath. “I say all that...but you remember when Sandra Blonski asked me out for ice cream one weekend? And I told her I was visiting my grandparents then I hid in the clubhouse for almost two days straight. Like I only left at night because you made me.”

Eddie remembered that perfectly. He remembered feeling annoyed at Sandra Blonski. And then really annoyed at Richie. And then weirdly finding Richie’s lie hilarious when Richie explained that he didn’t want to date Sandra Blonski but he also didn’t want to hurt her feelings so he said he was visiting his grandparents (who had both been dead going on six years). Eddie laughed at him for a solid ten minutes. He laughed so hard it was borderline hysterical and he could’ve sworn he was shaking the support beams of the clubhouse. But he’d found it so funny and relieving and he couldn’t help the laughter. It was either laugh or something else and Eddie hadn’t really come to terms with the something else yet.

“Yeah, Bill and Mike thought you were crazy for not taking her out,” was what Eddie said instead of all that.

“Because she got super hot sophomore year and her tits got massive junior year, but her personality was still really cool,” Richie added on matter of factly.

Making a face, Eddie took in a deep breath to yell Richie down for building up some big revelation only to talk about girls that asked him out and massive tits.

But then, as if he physically couldn't hold it in anymore, Richie rushed out, “I panicked and lied to avoid going on a date with her because I didn't just not like her. I don't like any girls. I never have. I'm gay.”

Mouth dropping open, Eddie raised his stunned eyes up to meet Richie's still terrified ones.

“I always talk about tits and shit because I figured if I said it all enough no one would suspect I didn't care about it. Like at all. I mean, boobs are cool. They're round and bouncy and stuff. But they do nothing for me. And I also figured that girls would hate the way I talked so they wouldn't ever want to, like, get with me or whatever because I'm so gross and only talk about sex and their bodies rather than their personalities and life goals and emotions and important shit.”

“Also I just think dirty jokes are funny,” Richie added on with an uncertain little shrug.

“What the fuck,” Eddie breathed as the new information slotted itself in his brain. Suddenly things made so much more sense. All the loud, obnoxious comments where anyone could hear. The way Richie spoke nonstop about this woman or that one but never, ever let his gaze linger for longer than the joke took. Hiding in the middle of nowhere rather than taking pretty, funny, newly popular Sandra Blonski on an ice cream date. The sheer amount of times Richie watched *Back to the Future* and just kind of...stared at Marty McFly.

Something bubbled in Eddie's chest.

Richie was making a face Eddie had never seen before. He looked anxious and scared, but it was all muted like he was very carefully concealing whatever he could. If Eddie didn't know Richie nearly as well as he knew himself, he doubted he'd be able to see the terror in the set of Richie's eyes, the press of his lips, the slight back and forth movement of his jaw as he ground his teeth.

Eddie, who knew exactly what kind of town they lived in, realized just how much experience Richie must have had at hiding.

Lunging at Richie, Eddie grappled the taller boy into a hug, his arms wrapped completely around him.

"I'm sorry Derry is such a shitty place full of shitty people," Eddie mumbled into Richie's shoulder. His ear was pressed to Richie's chest, close enough to his heart to hear the sped up, thudding beat. "And thanks for telling me."

"Wow, um, fuck," Richie muttered, hand coming up to pat the top of Eddie's head. "This went so much better than expected. I can roll with this. This is a good thing. Thanks, Eddie."

Realizing just what kind of position he was in, Eddie slowly extricated himself from Richie and cleared his throat. "W-what was the other thing?"

"What?" Richie asked dumbly, mouth slack.

"You said you had two things to tell me," Eddie reminded him helpfully. "Obviously this was the first thing. So what's the second?"

"Ah, shit. This went so well that I was really hoping you'd forget there was another thing," Richie told him under his breath, gaze pointed far away from Eddie's face.

"Come on. I already told you you can tell me anything. Don't make me fucking repeat myself."

"You actually just did. You repeated yourself literally right now. Besides, you love repeating yourself. That's your thing. You like the emphasis."

“Shut up, dumbass, you know what I mean.”

“Alright,” Richie nodded, the fear and apprehension back in his eyes.

Eddie waited with bated breath.

“Fuck,” Richie cursed at himself, voice barely audible despite how quiet it was. “Come on, Tozier. You can fucking do this.”

Jogging lightly in place, Richie looked like he was shadow boxing or warming up for gym or something. Then he stopped, hands clenching and unclenching in a repetitive motion at his sides.

“So...” Richie looked up and met Eddie’s eyes, features arranged in an impossibly serious and genuine expression. “I’m in love with you.”

For the second time that night, Eddie’s mouth dropped open.

“I-I-I-“ Eddie stuttered. His breathing picked up, became uneven. He needed his inhaler. Richie was- Holy shit, Richie was in love with him! Since fucking when?! And why?!?! WHAT. THE. FUCK.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, breathe!” Richie ordered, eyes stretched wide in horror. He reached forward and put his hands on Eddie’s shoulders. He took big breaths in example and Eddie followed suit. “It’s ok. Don’t freak out. It’s ok. Just breathe.”

As Eddie breathed more evenly, moving further and further away from a full on attack, Richie slowly removed his hands from Eddie’s shoulders and took a big step back.

Eddie’s shoulders felt cold.

“That went about as bad as I expected just with less punching me in the face and/or dick,” Richie told him in a forcibly calm voice.

A sinking feeling had Eddie rushing forward and grabbing Richie’s hand. “No, shit, sorry! Richie, I wasn’t-I didn’t-”

“Eddie, it’s ok,” Richie said at once, looking down at their joined hands. A sad, resigned smile fixed itself on his face. Eddie didn’t like it. It was too sad and made Eddie simultaneously want to cry and

punch whatever caused it. "One of your best friends just told you they're in love with you. That's gonna freak anyone out. But, uh, I wasn't coming onto you or anything. That wasn't why I was telling you. You don't have to say anything. I'm not, like, expecting you to return my feelings or whatever. No pressure for any response of any kind whatsoever."

"So why...?"

"Because I want you to know," Richie told him plainly. "I don't think you hear it enough."

Eddie tilted his head quizzically.

Richie met Eddie's confused gaze with the kindest, most sincere smile Eddie had ever seen on his face. It was fond. It was warm. It felt safe and reassuring. It made Eddie feel big.

"You're fantastic," Richie said on a sigh. "You can be mean as shit. You freak out so much. You're annoying as fuck. And I love that about you."

"Richie..."

"I love all the other stuff too, don't worry," Richie chuckled lightly. "You're smart. You're always looking out for the people you care about. You're probably the cutest person I've ever seen. You talk so fucking fast I love it. And you're so brave it makes me want to be brave."

"I'm not-"

Richie shushed him. "Shut up, Eddie. You're the bravest motherfucker I know and I've met Bill and Bev. I also know you're worried about college. I can tell. You've been silently melting down about it for weeks which is so not your usual style."

"That's why I wanted to tell you all this," Richie told him shakily. "Partly because I want to be honest. Partly because I'm so fucking tired of hiding. Partly because I want you to know that you're great. The greatest."

“Fantastic,” Eddie mumbled to their still joined hands.

“Fantastic,” Richie repeated with a squeeze of his hand. “And you don’t need to be so worried. Because no matter where you go or who you meet or whatever bullshit or cool stuff you go through, you’re always going to be fantastic.”

Eddie laughed thickly and blinked away the foggiest in his eyes. “You just- that was so fucking nice. What the hell.”

Richie shrugged self consciously. “I don’t know how much it means coming from me, but, uh, whatever happens when we all get our fine asses the fuck out of here, there’s always going to be someone out there who loves you.”

“...me,” Richie tacked on as he glanced up uncertainly from beneath his lashes, like Eddie hadn’t picked up on the fact Richie meant himself.

Eddie tackled him in another hug, arms trembling. “It means a lot,” Eddie sniffled. “It means a fucking lot, Richie.”

Richie pressed his face to Eddie’s hair and whispered the most heartfelt, “I love you, Eddie.”

Eddie held him tighter but he couldn’t figure out what to say back. He had his suspicions about what he should say, what was most honest. But instead he said nothing.

They silently parted and resumed their slow walk back.

Eddie grabbed Richie’s hand the second he tried to move more than a hand’s breadth away.

He didn’t look at Richie’s face for more than fleeting glances, but he also didn’t let go until he saw the flash of headlights.

When they reached Eddie’s house, all Eddie could do was jump up for another hug and declare, “I’m going to call you the second I’m in New York. Ok, dipshit? So make sure you pick up.”

The moment Eddie stepped back Richie bent himself in a low bow

and put on his best (worst) Westley impression. His stupid too big jacket flapped up in the back. "As you wish."

"Never do that again," Eddie commanded, face hot. Because now he knew what Richie meant when he said 'As you wish' and he couldn't handle being fucking Buttercup in this situation. He was the one leaving. He should've been the Dread Pirate Roberts. "I'm serious. Answer the fucking phone, Richie."

"I'm going to!" Richie laughed, smiling at Eddie's tenacious indignation. "Anything for you, Eds."

Eddie couldn't ignore how earnest Richie sounded when he said that. But he did a passable job of ignoring the way it made his stomach feel like it was full of raging butterflies.

"I'll see you before I leave tomorrow?" Eddie asked with a scowl that conveyed exactly how much Richie better be there.

"Wouldn't miss it," Richie winked, then, "Have to give my beloved Mrs. K her goodbye kiss, don't I? I already missed out on giving her her goodbye fuck so really-"

Shoving Richie's shoulder as hard as he could, Eddie whisper-shouted, "Those jokes don't work now that I know the truth, dickhead!"

"Oh, but don't they?" Richie whispered smugly, "Someone had to put me off women. And who better than your lovely mother?"

"I hate you," Eddie laughed helplessly. "You're so fucking annoying."

"Yeah, yeah," Richie breathed, a faint smile still on his face. "I know."

Eddie, overcome by the pressure in his chest and the tightening in his stomach, blurted out, "Thanks."

"For what?"

"You *know* what," Eddie told him emphatically.

Richie's entire expression gentled and his posture slackened until Eddie was once more looking at that soft, fond smile that made him feel so strong.

"You don't have to thank me," Richie told him honestly, open and expectation less. "It's pretty easy to do. And, uh, I think I'm going to keep on doing it."

"For how long?" Eddie swallowed, knowing the answer he wanted more than anything.

"Probably forever." Richie laughed wistfully and ducked his head, his shoulders hunched. "That sounds about right."

He walked a few paces before pausing. Turning on the spot, Richie tucked his hands into his jacket pockets and smiled crookedly at Eddie. "See you tomorrow, Eds!"

"You fucking better!" Eddie shouted back as loud as he dared while on his front lawn.

Richie just waved, emotion filling his eyes.

And then his back was turned and he was walking away, long legs carrying him off.

Eddie watched from his doorstep as Richie's tall, skinny figure grew smaller and smaller, already planning what they would do when he visited Richie in Los Angeles. The places Eddie would show him when Richie visited him in New York. What Eddie might work himself towards asking. Towards doing. Towards saying *back* .

The next day, Eddie forgot just two counties over.

Richie waited three days for a call that never came.

He didn't forget until he crossed the stateline.

5. Now

“Eds? Eddie? Holy shit, are you ok?”

Tears spilled over, blurring Eddie’s vision. His stomach churned and he wondered distantly if he was going to be sick. Heart beating too fast, breaths coming too quick and shallow, Eddie’s entire body reacted to the return of one of the most important memories of his life.

“Fuck, fuck, fucking shit,” Richie chanted, climbing over and around boxes to reach Eddie.

Shooting up from his seat, Eddie started to pace in front of the couch. His hands gripped his hair and his silently falling tears became a second thought, mind too busy processing the memory and what it all meant.

“That asshole,” Eddie hissed, rage and loss racing through him.

“Who?” Richie demanded, looking ready to fight that instant.

“That stupid little bitch of a clown!” Eddie wailed. “That homophobic boy meat loving pervert!”

“Alright, so you’re just going to casually drop ‘boy meat’ like that’s normal to say,” Richie muttered and nodded.

“He fucked it all up! He ruined everything!”

Richie grabbed Eddie by the wrist and gently tugged. Despite the feelings coursing through him, Eddie let himself be led. Richie set his hands on Eddie’s shoulders and made him sit back down, touch comforting and firm.

“Yeah, he ate a bunch of kids, traumatized literally all of us, and made our hometown into the hate crime capital of the United States. He was a ruiner.”

Hands coming up to cover his face, Eddie released a strangled scream into the dark space of his fingers. “You don’t get it, Richie, you don’t

fucking get it! I thought- FUCK! I thought we had time! I was going to call you, I was going to call you and we were going to stay in touch and-and we were going to spend the breaks together and not with our shitty families. W-we were-I was going to-

“Hey, hey,” Richie murmured soothingly. He dropped to a crouch in front of Eddie and put his hands on Eddie’s jittery knees, stilling them. He was still wearing that stupid old jacket that now fit him so fucking well. “You’re right, he did fuck it all up. But we beat him. We crushed his gross ass heart. We won. It’s alright now, Eddie. We’re ok.”

Miserable and sniffing, Eddie met Richie’s worried eyes with a melancholy look of his own. “I never called.”

Pain flit across Richie’s face. “None of us did. That’s not any of our faults.”

“But I made you promise to pick up,” Eddie whispered. His tears had finally stopped, but his voice was thick. “I told you I’d call as soon as I got to New York.”

Hands leaving Eddie’s knees at once, Richie sat back on his heels like he’d been slapped, emotion crossing his face before being shut down. He was even better at it than when they were kids, his expression turning neatly blank. Eddie hated that. Hated that Richie had to hide, that he did it enough to get good at it. But Eddie still knew Richie better than he knew anyone else and Richie’s eyes didn’t go flat, not like his features did.

The way he looked at him made Eddie absolutely certain that Richie had remembered long before this.

“When did you remember?”

Scratching the back of his neck, Richie muttered, “Right before the quarry.”

Eddie released a disbelieving puff of air. “Since then?”

“Yeah,” he nodded, looking down to where Eddie’s knees had started bouncing again. Richie put his hands back on them and Eddie

instantly felt better, more grounded, and he stopped his fidgeting. Richie's expression turned rueful. "It's kind of why I had that breakdown."

Brow lowered, Eddie searched Richie's features. "What?"

"I remembered while we were walking, after the house collapsed," Richie told him with a distant frown, like he was remembering as he spoke.

Then the somber mood created by thinking of Neibolt shattered around them, Richie's laugh breaking through it.

"That was probably the best moment of my life. Telling you. I was so scared that you'd hate me. But you didn't. You hugged me, you apologized for our shitty hometown. God, Eddie, you have no idea what that meant to me. That was the first time I'd ever said it out loud to someone and you were so amazing. You made me feel like it was ok, like I wasn't wrong for feeling like I did. Being honest with you made me feel really fucking right."

"And then I lost that," Richie said, voice mournful. "I didn't remember saying it out loud. I didn't remember admitting who I was. I didn't remember you accepting me. I didn't remember being brave and telling the boy I loved how I felt about him."

Richie looked down at the floor, his throat bobbing as he swallowed heavily. Eddie put a hand over one of Richie's where it still laid on his knee. Richie responded by turning his hand over and lacing their fingers together.

He sighed, deep and weary. "It's why I went mental there in the quarry. I realized I lost more than just you guys for all those years. I lost all that personal growth. Some homophobic bullshit."

He cleared his throat before meeting Eddie's eyes, renewed purpose in the set of his jaw and the seriousness of his gaze. "But Eddie...his sloppy clown ass is dead as shit. He's too dead to ruin fuck all these days. You said you thought we had time? We do. We get to live now. We had a tough fucking break, I'm the last person to deny that, but we're going to be alright. Look at us, man!"

Richie smiled winningly, shaking their interlaced hands persuasively. It made Eddie's mouth tug up in a tentative smile.

"You and me, we're alive and kicking, babe! You told your shitty, unhappy marriage to fuck off. I came out and stopped using other people's shitty jokes."

"Now you're just using your own shitty jokes," Eddie jabbed.

"Exactly!" Richie cheered. "Bev gave her abusive ex the world's biggest middle finger by smashing his face in, taking most of their money and all of their business, and shacking up with one of the world's nicest, hottest men. Ben sacked up and owned the fact he wrote that dumbass poem all those years ago. Mike finally got his sexy ass out of Derry. Bill started writing a new book and with lots of luck and encouragement from us it probably won't end worse than the Titanic's journey across the Atlantic. And Stan only uses the rolling eyes emoji in the group chat like twice a day. Things are looking up! So turn that adorable little frown upside down or you'll get even more wrinkles."

Eddie scowled heatlessly. "Fuck you, bro. Have you checked your hairline lately?"

"Ouch," Richie gasped dramatically. "Hitting me where it hurts."

His mock pained expression eased into earnest support. "I'm serious, Eds. We don't have to be ok all the time or immediately, but we are ok. You feel me?"

"Yeah," Eddie breathed. "I just fucking hate the thought of all that lost time. Of what we could have had."

After all these years, he finally knew what he had to say. It was just a matter of saying it.

"Richie, I..." Eddie looked Richie square in the eyes. He had to because this was the important thing, the life changing thing, the turning point he needed to remember. "I wasn't ready when you told me. I was still figuring my own shit out. But I really was going to call you. I was going to - fuck, I had a whole plan!"

Richie tilted his head, a bewildered frown drawing his eyebrows together. "What do you mean?"

"God, what the fuck do you think I mean, Richie?" Eddie snapped, holding their intertwined hands up and looking pointedly between them and Richie. "I was going to figure myself out while we kept in touch. Then I was going to ask to spend our college breaks together. And I was going to ask you on a date."

"No fucking way," Richie said at once, shaking his head in disbelief.

"Yes, dipshit," Eddie corrected impatiently. "We were going to date. And we'd do long distance. And then we'd figure out where we'd live. And we'd have a whole fucking life together."

Eddie paused as he took in what he said.

"Holy shit, I'm as stupid as you," Eddie realized.

"Rude," Richie pointed out in a dazed voice, his eyes wide and stunned.

"I seriously thought I wasn't ready to tell you even though I was already outlining our entire goddamn life plan. What the fuck!" Eddie spat. "Why didn't I just tell you that night, oh my god. Shit for brains is contagious."

"Hey, uh, Eds?"

"What?" Eddie asked, full of murderous intent for his past self.

Richie regarded him with that same exact smile. The one that made Eddie feel tall and capable and special. "You're fantastic."

Eddie swallowed noisily, heart thudding somewhere in the vicinity of his throat. "Did you keep doing it?"

"Fucking of course," Richie laughed, light and awed. "I said forever, didn't I? It hasn't even been half of that. So, um, if you want that life together...you can have it. That's on the table."

"We should probably kiss."

“We should definitely kiss.”

Richie lurched forward and sealed their mouths together. It was everything first kisses should be - warm and safe and just a little dangerous and nerve wracking. Eddie even forgave the fact that Richie's glasses were digging into his cheek.

“You could probably negotiate me down to frenching,” Richie said against his lips. “I'm talking tongue in throat levels of making out.”

Eddie pulled away and raised an eyebrow. “Richie, I could probably negotiate you down to fucking just by saying the word.”

“You could, that's totally accurate, but it's kind of fucked up to call me out like this right after our first kiss.”

“Fucking.”

Richie collapsed forward with a drawn out groan, his head pressed to Eddie's stomach.

“Eddie, my love, why?”

“Oh, I wasn't making fun of you, I was seeing if that'd actually work.”

Hands came up to grip Eddie's hips, fingers digging in hard enough to let themselves be known. Richie kept his face buried in Eddie's shirt and Eddie followed the impulse to run his fingers through Richie's hair, clearing away the dust.

“Do not mess with me right now, I'm very fragile,” Richie spoke, voice muffled.

“Wow, I was wrong. It's actually a lot harder to get you into bed than I thought,” Eddie mused.

“I'm not some kind of common hussy.”

“So was that a no on the fucking?”

“Fuck me, I love you,” Richie declared, planting a kiss on Eddie's stomach before clambering to his feet and offering a hand. “Yours or

mine?”

“Yours.” Eddie allowed Richie to pull him up, adding on, “I’m surprised you didn’t try for the couch.”

“Around all these boxes and clutter and shit?” Richie gave Eddie a look. “You’d want to stop halfway through just to clean it all up.”

“Hey, fuck you!” Eddie growled, even as he considered how well Richie knew him. “But that reminds me, take that fucking jacket off. It’s probably covered in dust, allergens, insect carcasses, droppings, God knows what else.”

“But don’t I look sexy in it?”

Eddie did not dignify that with a response.

“Oh my god, dude, you think I look sexy in it!” Richie crowed, correctly interpreting the silence. He smiled wide, surprised and pleased even as he started to peel the jacket off. He threw it to the side carelessly and immediately noticed Eddie’s look of displeasure when it hit the floor by a box. “Relax, I’ll take care of it once you’re done thoroughly ravishing me.”

“You better.”

“Trust me, that’s my lucky jacket. I’ll take care of it.”

Eddie looked at the pile of old brown leather and failed to hide his smile. It was kind of a lucky jacket.

“Plus,” Richie sang, “you think I look sexy in it.”

Rolling his eyes, Eddie dragged Richie into his room, fully intent on showing him just how sexy Eddie found him without the jacket. Preferably without anything at all.

As Richie shucked his shirt and pants in record time, using more enthusiasm than coordination, Eddie admired him. Everything about him was exactly what Eddie wanted - the broad expanse of his shoulders and back, his long limbs, the boxers with the X-Men logo printed all over that got kicked aside, and his thighs which were

really just unnecessary but very much appreciated.

“Hey,” Eddie called, eyes dragging up and down Richie’s exposed form. “You’re fantastic.”

“Cool, cool, cool,” Richie nodded, face and neck flushing a splotchy red. “Less embarrassing me and more taking your pants off.”

“I really fucking love you,” Eddie told him with a besotted huff.

Richie stared.

He blinked.

He opened his mouth.

He closed it.

“My heart can’t take this,” he finally mumbled to himself. Then, looking up, “Dick out, Kaspbrak. I haven’t got all day. The guy I’m in love with is a real prick about cleanliness and I’ve got shit to put away.”

“It’s probably been said before, but I’m gonna kill you,” Eddie mentioned conversationally, divesting himself of his clothes before crawling onto the bed.

“You fucking might,” Richie sighed happily, eyes tracking Eddie’s every movement until they were close enough to meet in a heated kiss.

Hands firmly planted into the mattress below, Eddie braced himself with his arms on both sides of Richie’s head. He was basically straddling Richie’s waist, the hard line of Richie’s erection pressed against the cleft of his ass. He leaned in and nosed at Richie’s neck, pressing kisses and the occasional bite against the reddening flesh.

“Ok, so,” Richie swallowed. “You are very hot and I am very in love with you.”

“Ok?” Eddie asked, waiting for Richie’s point while his own mouth hovered over the column of Richie’s throat.

“Just prefacing the fact that this isn’t going to last long and I really hope you find premature ejaculation a turn on.”

Eddie opened his mouth to give Richie a thorough roasting at the exact same time his cock twitched. Eddie closed his mouth with a snap. He always learned a lot about himself with Richie.

“Phew,” Richie laughed, looking down at Eddie’s traitorous dick. He pecked a sweet kiss to Eddie’s scarred cheek. “Guess we’re all good here.”

“Shut the fuck up, Richie,” Eddie ordered, adjusting his position so he could get a grip on Richie’s dick. He was basically riding one of Richie’s thighs now, but the view was good and Richie didn’t seem to mind.

“Oh, fuck,” Richie grunted, head thrown back against his pillow.

Swiping his thumb to spread the precome at the head of Richie’s cock, Eddie started stroking slowly but surely. The slide wasn’t ideal despite the pleased hums Richie made, so Eddie stopped long enough to ask, “Where’s your lube?”

“Had to make me work for the handy, didn’t you, Eds?” Making a show of sitting up with put upon sounds of complaint, Richie reached over to his bedside table and opened the drawer, grabbing a mostly full bottle from within. “Couldn’t just spit in your palm and call it a day.”

Snatching the bottle from him and shoving him once for good measure, Eddie made a face. “Spit, Richie? Seriously? Spit. That’s what you would’ve liked? That’s disgusting. I’m not spitting in my palm when you have perfectly good lubricant like two feet away. That’s so fucking gross. Do you know how many germs are in spit? Do you?”

“I’d like to point out that we were kissing seconds ago. And that you were mouthing at my neck like a sexy toothless vampire.”

“That’s entirely different from spitting into my hand like some kind of animal!”

“Does this anti-spit policy mean blow jobs are off the table?”

Eddie stopped moving, the bottle upended over his palm and a slow drip of lube filling the well of his hand.

“I never said that,” Eddie said at once, voice strained.

Richie’s eyebrows shot up and a smirk turned his face smug. “Oh, so now that your dick might be going in my mouth suddenly spit isn’t so bad. I see how it is.”

Eddie ogled Richie’s smirking, stupid mouth.

“Eddie, the lube.”

“Shit!”

Eddie righted the bottle before any more could come out, his hand full of far too much for a single hand job.

“This is your fault,” Eddie immediately blamed.

Richie snorted, eyeing his handful of lube with amusement plastered across his face. “Because I want to blow you and apparently that broke your brain?”

“Yes,” Eddie snapped. “Asshole.”

They both stared at the excessive amount of lube.

“Here, we’ll share,” Richie decided at once. He grabbed Eddie by the wrist and tipped some of the warmed lube into his own hand. Then, without any further warning, he started stroking Eddie’s cock up and down.

“Fucking shit!” Eddie gasped, rolling his hips in time with the movement.

“Good?”

“A little notice next time,” Eddie wheezed. Then, as Richie slowed, “I didn’t say stop!”

Richie leaned in and started kissing Eddie's chest. He moved up to his neck, along his jaw, and eventually reached his ear where he decided to add teeth into the mix and bit sharply at Eddie's earlobe. At the same time he gave Eddie a particularly good stroke from base to tip, just the right amount of pressure and with enough movement against the head to have Eddie's eyes fluttering.

"Oh fuck, oh fuck," Eddie moaned. "Off. Get off my dick. I refuse to come first."

Richie did as he was told, immediately removing his hand even though he pouted as he did so. "You're lucky I'm a people pleaser."

"You've never pleased a single person in your life," Eddie accused even as he made to jerk Richie off again.

Sinking back down on the bed, Richie groaned deeply and dragged his clean hand up and down Eddie's side and thigh, making the occasional stop at his hip to give it a squeeze.

"I was pleasing you just fine."

"You were," Eddie admitted, watching with hungry, rapt attention as Richie's breathing grew shallower and his hips circled in aborted thrusts, like Richie couldn't help the movement and was struggling to hold it back. "You were really good."

Richie's eyes widened at that and his dick throbbed in Eddie's hold.

A smirk slowly twisted up the corner of Eddie's lips. "Richie."

"Shut up," Richie begged, knowing at once what Eddie noticed. "You got all hot and bothered over me possibly going off too soon. You do not get to say a fucking thing."

"But Richie," Eddie purred, bending down so he could whisper into Richie's ear. He kept up the steady motion of his hand and wrist, throwing in a twist or two. "God, just having your hands on me got me so hard. You touched me so well, better than anyone. Better than I could do myself. Fuck, I thought I was going to come without having gotten to really enjoy you. You're just so fucking good."

Sitting up to check on his results, Eddie was inordinately pleased to see Richie was close. His dick was hard and throbbing, leaking enough precome to drip onto his belly. His pupils were blown, his expression strained as sweat gathered at his temples and forehead.

"You're a jerk," he laughed, voice all air. He looked up at Eddie like Eddie had all the answers.

"You should do something really good for me," Eddie murmured low and persuasive, "and come."

And Richie fucking did.

"Shit," Eddie bit out, watching as Richie's body tensed all over. His hands fisted the bedsheets and he jolted like he'd been electrocuted even as he turned his face into the pillows, mouth open in a silent scream followed by a choked, breathless grunt. His eyes shut tight like he was in pain and then, after a drawn out moment of unrestrained feeling, it all came to an end. Richie's body seemed to melt as all his muscles went lax, the tension released and heightened feeling subsumed by heavy satisfaction. He opened his eyes and looked at Eddie, heavy lidded and sated.

"You give a damn good HJ, Eduardo."

"I need you to get me off right now," Eddie told him, urgent tone drastically lower than his usual voice and brooking no argument.

"I live to serve," Richie grinned lazily. "Scoot on up here. My mouth is a designated Eddie Kaspbrak's Dick parking spot."

"I'm mad that your words don't make me soft."

"Obviously not that mad," Richie mumbled as Eddie got into position, straddling Richie's chest.

And then Richie had a hand around his shaft, guiding Eddie's cock into his mouth.

It was hot. And wet. And so gross in a fucking amazing way.

Eddie choked on air, one hand flying to find a steady hold on

Richie's headboard, the other gripping Richie's hair. He hummed and Eddie's hips stuttered.

He made to warn Richie but then his orgasm ripped through him, sudden and all encompassing. He managed to pull out even as he shouted, "Richie!"

Using his hand on the headboard to keep himself up, Eddie panted until he got back to his senses.

The first thing that registered was Richie's barely stifled giggles.

"What. The fuck. Is so funny?" Eddie demanded, exhausted and ready to collapse after some clean up.

"I can't believe you came on my glasses." Richie's laughter erupted, free and loose enough to shake Eddie where he still straddled his chest.

Eddie looked down in a haze.

Richie looked up at him, eyes dancing in time with his laughter. His face was splattered in Eddie's come, most of it streaked up the corner of his mouth though one of his lenses had a stripe painted clear across.

"Oh my god, I came on your glasses."

"Yeah, I know."

"Oh my god."

"Right?"

Eddie burst into laughter, rolling off of Richie so he could lay beside him.

"Sorry," Eddie finally told him as he wiped his own face with the back of his hand, clearing some of the sweat and laughter induced tears.

"Are you really?"

Eddie studied his work and memorized the way Richie looked - wild haired, come splattered, and grinning.

“No. I think it’s an improvement.”

“Trust me, babe.” Richie stretched and yawned. “Your jizz is a massive improvement to my life.”

“You’re so fucking gross.”

“Yeah and you came on this gross guy’s glasses so really who’s worse,” Richie shrugged, heaving himself out of bed and towards his bathroom.

He came back with tissues and wordlessly wiped up Eddie first, clearing his hand of come and lube before attending to the mess Eddie left on him.

“Sheets need to be changed,” Richie told him in an intimate rumble. “Want to do that or shower first?”

Eddie smiled at the easy consideration. “Shower.”

“Separate or together?” Richie wiggled his shoulders playfully.

“You look so dumb,” Eddie sighed, completely in love. “Together, obviously.”

Grinning wide, Richie offered Eddie his hand and pulled him up. He didn’t let go, not even after Eddie was back on his feet. “Nice.”

It really fucking was.

“You’re really making my dreams come true here, man. I don’t know how you do it.”

Eddie paused in the entryway to the bathroom. He met Richie’s fond gaze with the most unimpressed look he could muster.

“Because they’re my dreams too, dumbass.”

“Fuck,” Richie breathed reverentially. “That was so smooth, Eddie,

holy shit.”

Dragging a stunned and beaming Richie towards the shower, Eddie smiled his own self satisfied smile.

It was pretty smooth.

Notes for the Chapter:

Eddie: Alright. We go in. We sit down. We make small talk, see how everyone's doing. Then, when conversation naturally flows in that direction, we tell them.

Richie: Got it.

Five Minutes Later

Richie, rushing into the restaurant: Guess who's letting me touch his dick on a regular basis?!?!

Bill: ...

Mike: ...

Ben: ...

Stan, pained: ...

Bev: Well, I hope he returns the favor.

Richie: HE DOES!

Eddie: ...I do.